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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, March 12, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "THE HOME GARDEN." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Do you remember that chap in Greek mythology who couldn't be beaten so long as he kept his feet on the ground? His name was Antaeus (An-tea-us), wasn't it? Finally some enemy found out the secret of his great strength. This enemy conquered by lifting him into the air so that he could have no contact with Mother Earth.

It seems to me that most of us Americans are a little like old Antaeus. Maybe we don't gather strength from getting our fingers into the good, rich earth, but we do get a lot of fun out of it. For at least one season of the year we like to become tillers of the soil, if only in a small way.

There are two people most any of us would like to consult about what to put into our kitchen garden. The nutrition expert and the seasoned gardener. And for the information in this broadcast we have the blessings of both. Diet experts in the Bureau of Home Economics at Washington checked to see that these vegetables for our garden were important ones for the family's health needs. And W. R. Beattie, senior horticulturist in the U. S. Department of Agriculture, has provided some pointers on varieties of the various vegetable crops adapted in many parts of the United States. Beattie points out that for some localities, on account of special soil or climatic conditions, or because of the menace of particular insects or diseases, these standard varieties are not always the best varieties. To meet these special local conditions Federal and State scientists, the seed trade, and growers, have bred or selected varieties which will thrive better than any other under the special conditions. In each State the agricultural extension service will be able to supply information about the variety best adapted to the specific conditions of any locality within the State.

RADISHES are a joy to the amateur gardener. They mature the most quickly of all the garden crops -- in 20 to 30 days. Since they are in prime eating condition for such a short time, it's a good idea to make successive plantings, maybe two weeks apart. A row only a few feet long will develop all the family will eat. Mr. Beattie says the most used varieties are Little Scarlet Globe and French Breakfast for very early, White Icicle for a week to 10 days later. Radishes are a valuable vitamin C source and a fair one for vitamin B. You'll want to use some of the tops mixed in with spinach for greens.

CABBAGE is one of the most important of home garden crops, and a good source of vitamins B, C, and G. Good cabbage seed is essential, but a few cents worth ought to produce 2 or 3 dozen heads -- all the average family can use. Lately there have been developed seven different strains not affected by the yellows disease -- arch enemy of some cabbage growers. Here again Mr. Beattie makes some suggestions as to varieties. Jersey Queen is an early one with a pointed head. Wisconsin-All-Season is a medium early variety, and the Wisconsin Hollander a late one. All these are immune to yellows and all are good varieties even for the drier sections.



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PEAS can be planted right in with the radishes to save space. The radishes will be gone before the peas get big enough to need much room. You just have to be more careful about how you pull the radishes. If you're very fond of peas you may want to make successive plantings at 10-day intervals during the spring. Did you know that the old edible sugar-podded peas are staging a comeback? The kind you cook pod and all. Mr. Beattie says two of the best of these varieties are Sugar Stick and Tall Melting Sugar. A friend of mine said she'd never eaten any pea pods but what were woody and unappetizing. But Mr. Beattie says that's because those peas weren't grown properly. Laxton Progress and Hundredfold are good early shelling varieties. Strategem is two weeks later than the Progress pea but yields heavily under favorable conditions. Peas are rich in vitamins A, B, and C.

SPINACH may also go into that early garden. It can be grown longer than almost any of the other greens except cabbage. Mr. Beattie recommends the Nobel because it grows fast and has smooth leaves that are easy to clean. There's a new mustard spinach on the market now. Called Tendergreen. Very early, more pungent than the regular spinach, and fine for hot weather. New Zealand spinach is another good greens which stands up well under midsummer heat. As you all know, spinach is valuable for vitamins A, B, C, and G.

Of course one must have ONIONS in one's garden. The home gardener most often uses sets or small onions for his plantings. Mr. Beattie reports that the old varieties are still going strong: Multiplier, Top, and Prizetaker. The Bermuda and Valencia are mild flavored varieties, and keep well. Onions are good sources of vitamin C and fair sources of B and G.

CARROTS are fine for successive plantings, about three weeks apart, for they are rich sources of vitamins A, B, and C. You can put your first carrots in along with that second sowing of radishes. Radishes help break the earth crust for the slower growing yellow vegetable. The older carrot varieties are still good.

LETTUCE is another of those vegetables without which no garden is complete. It takes about 6 weeks to grow lettuce plants. Many people like to start them inside and then transplant them after 4 or 5 leaves have formed. Leaf lettuce has much more food value than head lettuce does. A consoling thought, since it is also easier to grow. Mr. Beattie says two varieties, good all over the country are Early Curled Simpson and Grand Rapids. Cos lettuce is a semi-head variety which stands heat fairly well.

BEETS are good for vitamin G, and beet tops for A, B, and G. Old varieties have been constantly improved. Two favorites are Early Wonder and Crosby Egyptian.

Then you'll want some CHARD in that garden. A 30 or 40 foot row will serve a family the summer long. The leading variety is Lucullus.

Finally, SNAP BEANS and TOMATOES. Dietetically these are hard to beat. Especially the tomato, which is one of Nature's richest storehouses of vitamins A, B, C, and G. About 25 early plants and 50 later ones will be fine. You can train them to go up the side of the garage. Or set them in where the lettuce and radishes grew earlier in the season. Mr. Beattie says the Pritchard is a good early variety of tomato, the Marglobe excellent for later. Recommended snap bean varieties are the Tendergreen and the Early Bountiful.

Well, time's up! So I'll leave you with best wishes for a fine garden. I hope it flourishes and produces lots of vitamins for you!

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